

BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH - ANALYST: APRIL 17, 1980 *SLB*1. SOVIET-ARGENTINE TIES BURGEONING

US countermeasures in the wake of Afghanistan have stimulated further Soviet efforts to exploit Argentine policy differences with the US, particularly in the commercial area. Although Soviet interests at the moment appear predominantly economic, Moscow is also looking to longer-term political influence with Argentina.

Since the beginning of this year the Soviets have moved expeditiously to strengthen ties with Argentina.

--In January, a high-level delegation was sent to Buenos Aires to negotiate increases in grain purchases to help make up the deficit resulting from the US embargo of 17 million tons of grain to the USSR. So far this year [redacted] Soviet purchases from Argentina total 2.3 million metric tons and [redacted] another 1.7 million metric tons. (At this point these figures are within the understanding reached with the Argentines during the Goodpaster visit.) The new high-level Soviet delegation presently in Argentina signed a joint declaration on April 16 announcing arrangements to increase trade, an air agreement, and cooperation in the energy field; the declaration notes, however, that the purchase of wheat "will continue to be within the usual volumes."

In March, a Soviet fishing industry delegation signed a protocol of understanding with the Argentines under the existing science/technology cooperation convention which will allow Soviet oceanographic research in Argentine waters. The Soviets were also probably seeking fishing rights in the Argentine-claimed 200-mile economic zone, which Buenos Aires allows only through bilateral agreements, [redacted]

--At the beginning of April, the President of the Argentine Atomic Energy Commission (CNEA) announced that excellent results had been achieved at Argentine-USSR nuclear talks held in Moscow in late March to explore the possibilities for nuclear cooperation. The Soviets, [redacted] said that if US-Argentine negotiations for enriched uranium were not successful, the USSR would meet Argentina's enriched uranium requirements. Possible Soviet supply of heavy water and heavy water technology may have been discussed, although Soviet officials have privately reiterated to us Moscow's opposition to such transfers.

--No arms sales have yet been confirmed but the Soviets have offered several times to sell various arms and have instituted a military exchange training program. US restrictions on arms sales to Argentina could make Soviet offers increasingly attractive.

--Seeking to identify with Argentine resentment over the US administration's human rights policy, Moscow has excluded the Argentine military from the type of propaganda condemnations for alleged human rights violations and "fascist" tendencies it has leveled, for example, against the military regime in Chile.

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